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ABSTRACT

Developed by utilizing only Jicarilla Apache people as resources to preserve the authenticity of the material and information, this booklet presents information on the Jicarilla Apache celebration of "Go-gii-ya". "Go-gii-ya" is a religious feast and ceremony held annually over a three-day period which climaxes on the fifteenth day of September. The material presented excludes the more deeply detailed information because of its religious significance to the Jicarilla people. Written for the high school teacher and student, this booklet includes a vocabulary list, comprehension questions, and suggested activities which will be helpful to both the teacher and student. (NQ)

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Go-gíí-ya

JICARILLA APACHE CELEBRATION

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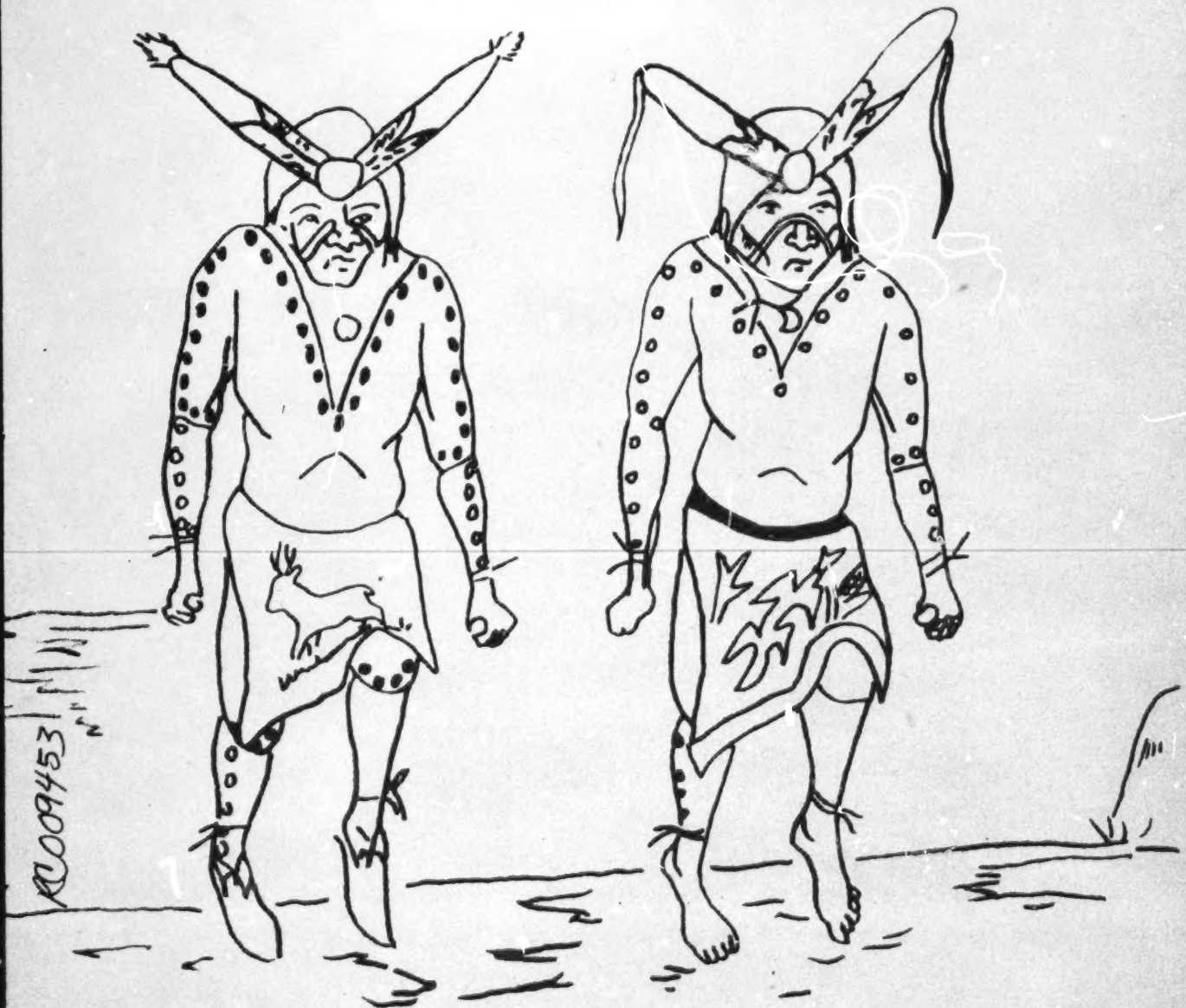

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GO-GÍÍ-YA

Jicarilla Apache Celebration

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Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Education, Emergency School Aid Act

INTRODUCTION

Morris E. Opler, the author of MYTHS AND TALES OF THE JICARILLA APACHE INDIANS, is highly congratulated and commended for the most extensive work to date on the Jicarilla Apache. During the preparation and development of this booklet, Opler's book proved to be most helpful.

This booklet was developed by the utilization of only Jicarilla people as resources to preserve the authenticity of the material and information. The material presented herein excludes the more deeply detailed information because of its religious significance to the Jicarilla people. There is a noticeable distinction in the ceremony between the past and the present. This should be viewed as such by the reader because of modern innovations.

This booklet is written for the high school teacher and student. It is designed to meet a need within the Social Studies Curriculum, hopefully to enrich its content and to provide one more area of study.

The booklet includes a vocabulary list, comprehension

questions, suggested activities, slides, and cassette tapes which will be helpful to both the teacher and student.

This booklet would not have been possible without the valuable help of the following Jicarilla Apache resources: Buster Vicenti, Counselor for the ESAA Program, Wilma Phone, Jicarilla Language Specialist, and Conrad Valdez, illustrator. To them, much appreciation is indebted.

Levi Pesata
Coordinator, Cultural Studies Program

GO-GÍÍ-YA

Jicarilla Apache Celebration

Go-gíí-ya, the Jicarilla Apache celebration is a feast and ceremony held annually. It is held over a three-day period which climaxes on the fifteenth day of September.

The people start putting up camps as early as the tenth of September and other necessary preparations begin on the thirteenth.

The race track is prepared and the kivas or ceremonial corrals are set up by the thirteenth of September when the people begin to arrive. The running area is laid out from east to west. The ends of the race track are marked by two holy, spherical, and elongated rocks. These two rocks are blessed and prayed over by the medicine men on the fourteenth day of September and then the festivities officially begin.

The Llanero (Red Clan) and the Ollero (White Clan) form the basis of the sides. The terminology is Spanish

and translated, Llanero means "Plains People" and Ollero means "Sand People."

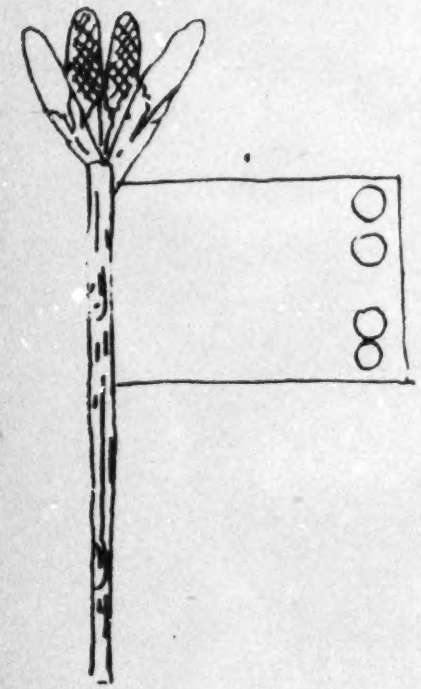
Following the blessing of the holy rocks, each clan follows on horseback a lead horseman carrying their clan flag. They circle the race track to the beat of the drum. The Red Clan has a red flag with a crescent moon centered on the banner. The White Clan has a white flag with a yellow sun centered on the banner. The standard or flagpole for each clan is an aspen tipi pole that has been used in a home. Both clan flags or banners are tied to the standard along with two fresh ears of corn and two eagle feathers.

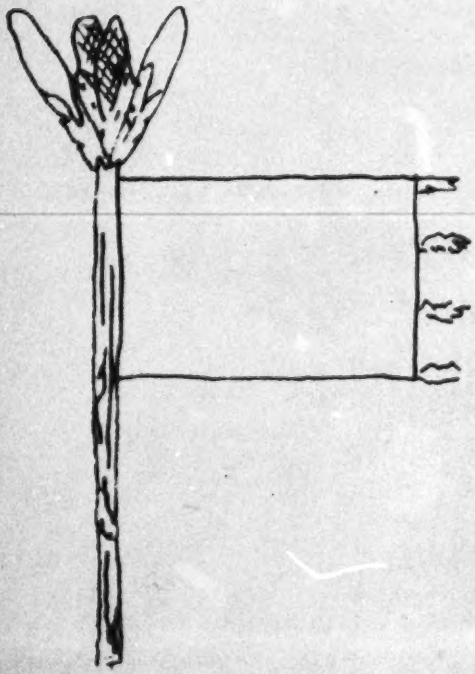
From the track, the Red Clan ride off to the North and the White Clan ride off to the South to their tryout areas. From the tryout areas each will race against their own clansmen to select the fastest runner to begin the race against the leader of the opposing clan.

All contestants will race, but the fastest one from each side begin the race by racing against each other and followed by the other runners in the order they came in at the tryout or preliminary.

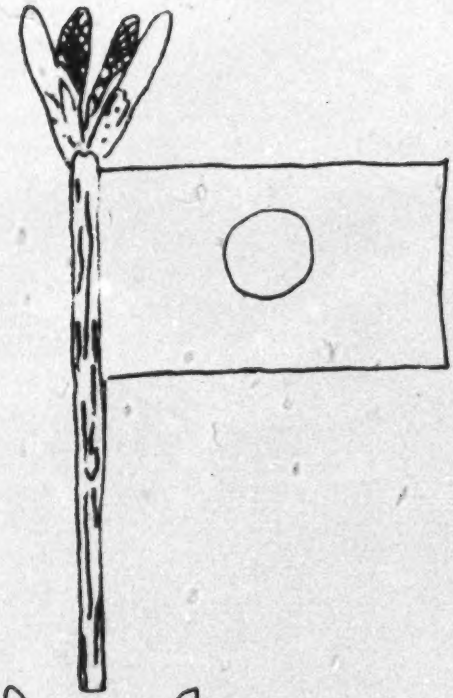
Boys, even though they are not good runners, are supposed to run at least once in a race. Boys who do not participate will be sickly and poor. The boys are blessed and

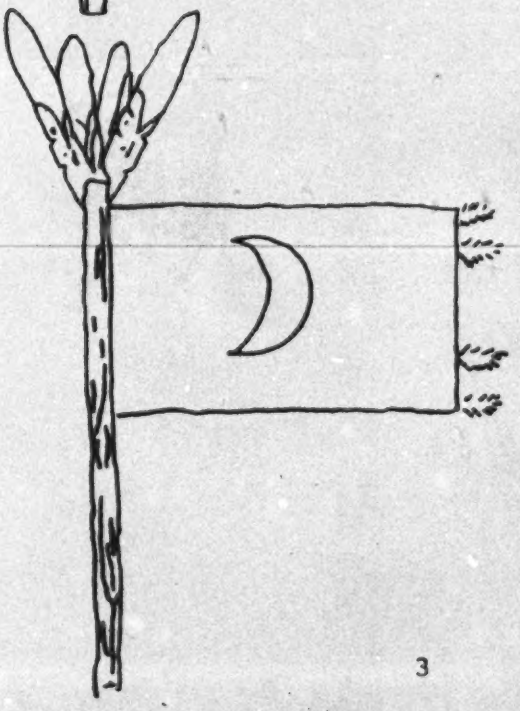
Present





Past





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helped by this ceremony.

Reason For The First Ceremonial Race

The reason for the first ceremonial race was that there was too much food of both kinds - meat and plants - at the same time. The food was all mixed up and the people did not know how to use it. The food did not come in season then as it does now.

Sun and Moon decided that food must be divided up and that there should be seasons for the different kinds of food. So they agreed to run a race. Moon bet her fruits against Sun's animals.

Sun won the first race and his side was able to hunt all kinds of animals and had a great deal of meat to eat that year. Sun and Moon agreed to run the race every year for four years. The second year Moon's side won. The third year Sun's side won. The fourth year Moon's side won again. Sun and Moon took turns winning the race because people can not eat meat all the time and they can not eat fruits and vegetables all the time. It was to

insure both kinds of food for mankind. After the fourth race, the ceremony was handed down to the Apache.

The Apache were watching the race those four years. So Sun, Moon, White God, Ancestral Man, Monster Slayer, and Water's Child decided to give it to them. They told the Apache, "If you stop holding this ceremony, you will starve." That is why the ceremony is held every year.

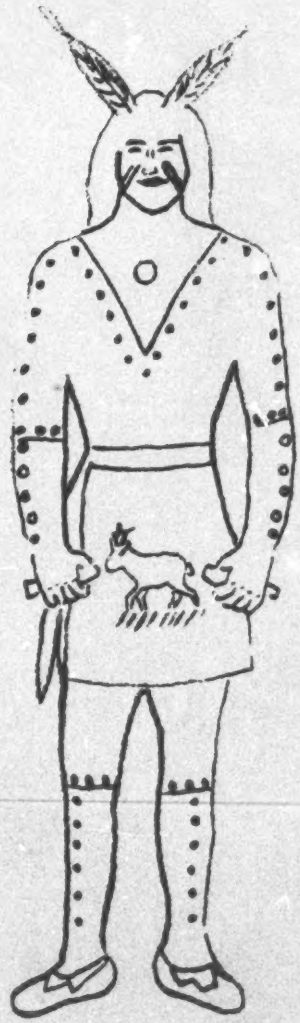
But in the course of time, the people became lax and the ceremony had to be re-introduced. Two girls were offered in marriage as prizes. The girls were placed there so that the Jicarilla people would multiply and be numerous.

Sun and Moon enlisted the aid of the culture heroes, the deities, the animals, and such fast-flying birds as the Sandhill Crane, the Cliff Swallow, the Falcon, and the Humming Bird. As the race is now carried on by the Jicarilla, the Ollero (White Clan) represents the side of the Sun and the animals, while the Llanero (Red Clan) takes the part of the Moon and the plants.

RELAY LEAD RUNNERS

Red (Llanero)

White (Ollero)



Selection of Ceremony Representatives

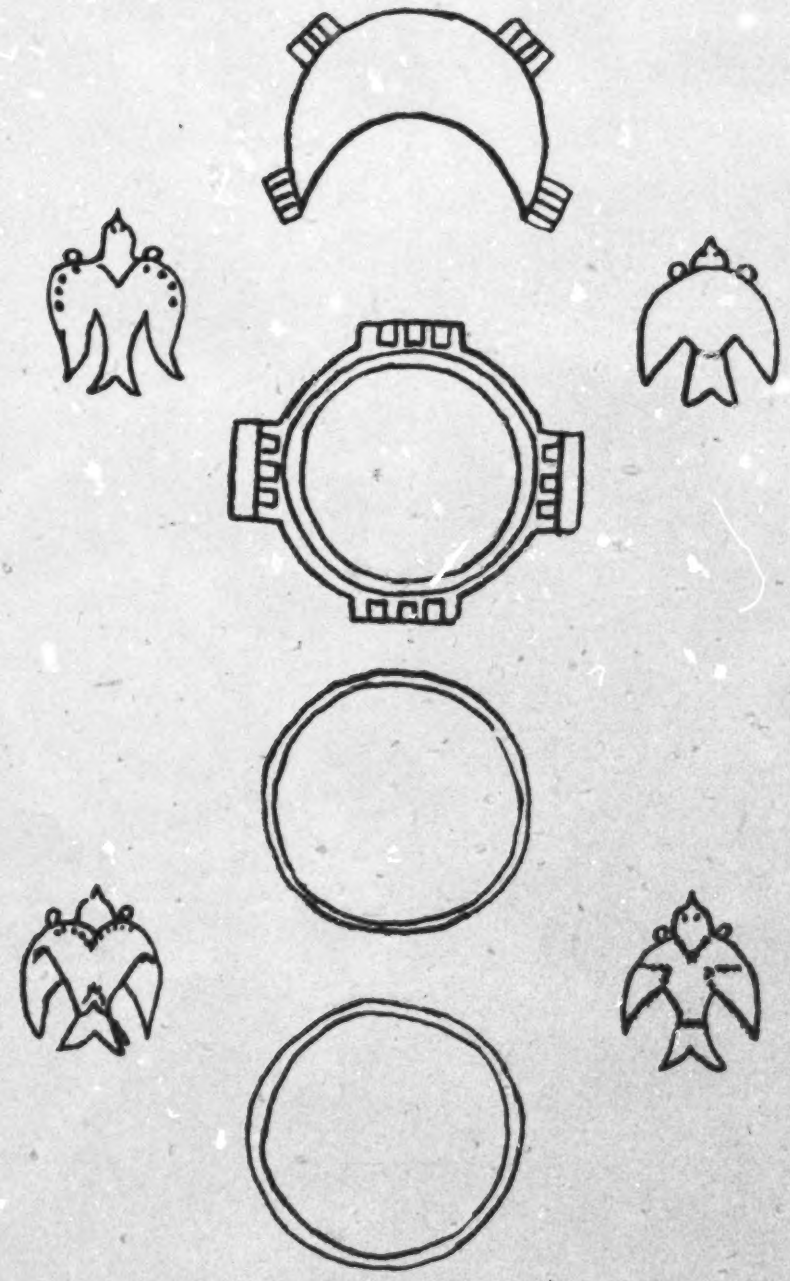
Sometime before the ceremony, the prominent men of each Clan choose their leader. This leader, always himself a Ceremonialist, appoints assistants who are well-versed in the intricacies of the rite, for there is a secret enclosure to erect, an elaborate ground drawing to trace, feathers, paints, and other necessary materials to prepare for the decoration of the runners.

Ground Drawing

The ground drawing is of particular importance at this time. The ceremony here is a traditional or "long life" ceremony which was handed down from the beginning of the world by one generation of practitioners to the next.

The mastery aspect of the ground drawing is not the result of inspiration or divine favor, for the ceremony has no roots in shamanism. The songs and ground drawings were learned before the people came up from down below, before the emergence.

Ground Drawing of Llanero Clan in kiva Sept. 15th



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In the ground drawing, the medicine men make the Sun and the Moon the same as the first ones made by Holy Boy in the beginning. The Sun is made round with four sets of rays, all of pollen. The Moon is made in the shape of the full moon. The songs they sing when they make the Sun and the Moon are about how the Sun and the Moon were made in the creation. These songs and prayers were made and given in the world below. These men sing of how Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman were made and of how the people traveled up this earth on the ladder. They also sing songs for a long life and about the food and the animals.

Significance of the Location of the Ceremonial Grounds

The corrals or kivas stand for "the place of emergence" and the race track is thought of as "the spot from which the first race around the world for plants and animals began". Nearby is a body of water, symbolic of the traditional lake of the place of emergence.

There is an association of the race track with the Milky Way because according to the myths, the Milky Way marks the first path of the Sun and the Moon when they participated as the two contestants of the first ceremonial relay race. The kivas are erected in the form of a corral and are made of aspen trees and branches.

The Morning of the Race and Events for that Day

Early in the morning the men gather at their holy places. For each kiva there is a door-keeper appointed who keeps out people who have no business there.

All the old men smoke and pray and they get ready to start the necessary work in the kivas. One man gets the paints ready to paint the runners. Some men bring in dead birds for feathers to decorate the participants.

The leader now gets ready to do the ground drawing. Three men are called upon to assist him and the four men do the ground drawing. The figures are not the same every year because they are inter-changed from year to year.

The painting of the runners begin with the painting of the boy who won in the preliminary race. At this time the blessing and the dancing take place in each kiva. The prayers and blessing deal with request for strength and purity greater than that of the other clan so that victory would come.

On the day of the race, the people all dress in fine clothes and traditional outfits. They begin to gather on both sides of the race track. The events begin early in the morning as soon as the sun comes up as befits a ceremony of gratefulness to the sun and the spirit which recreates life.

Each clan begins the ceremony by dancing from their end of the track to the opposite clan's end with prayers and songs. Two tribal elders dressed in the feather will then run from the west to the east. Then two other elders will run from the east to the west. They represent the birds who first ran and thus initiated this ancient worship for the renewal of life. As soon as the second two elder runners reach the west side, that signals the beginning of the actual race.

During the race the crowd is held back and nobody is allowed on the race track or to cross the track. The runners will race in relays until each clan's runner crosses the other in the exact middle of the race track. The clan runner who was ahead one length or half of the track is then declared the winner. The losing clan is then responsible for providing the other clan with gifts of food from the earth.

The two clans then retreat to their respective ends of the race track. Slowly, they begin marching by dancing and singing toward the other clan. They meet in the middle and they dance back and forth, crisscrossing each other four times. Then the losing clan throws gifts of food and material goods required of its members.

The race at this point ends in a good-natured riot. After parading to their respective kivas and dancing once again back and forth, they re-enter the kiva for more prayers and blessings and to terminate the religious aspect of the ceremony.

Present-day Activities

In the afternoon, there are many social and entertaining programs. There is the Go-gii-ya Rodeo, War Dance and Social Dance contests, Social Dancing, sale of food and drinks, bartering between different tribes, and general exchange of visitors in the camps.

A highlight of the activities is the selection of Miss Go-gii-ya from the young and talented Jicarilla girls who compete for the coveted title.

In the evening, the Round Dance or "49" begins. It lasts until the dawn of the sixteenth.

The ceremonials and the pleasures are over until the next year when another Go-gii-ya will hopefully begin a new cycle.

VOCABULARY

Ancestral Man - the first Jicarilla man created.

Ancestral Woman - the first Jicarilla woman created.

ceremonialist - a person who had participated in a ceremony many times in the past.

Culture Heroes - persons responsible for ridding the world of evils and monsters. They had supernatural powers.

deities - Jicarilla Culture Heroes and supernaturals.

divine - directed or devoted to God or a god; sacred.

door keeper - a person appointed to watch the entrance to a kiva during a ceremony to keep out non-participants.

dressed in the feather - a person with a ceremonial painted face and hair covered with downy feathers and usually holding one feather in each hand.

elaborate - to work out in detail; develop carefully and thoroughly.

emergence - the place from which the Jicarilla people came up to this world. The preparation and process to come up from below is all considered part of the emergence in Jicarilla religion.

Holy Boy - one of the Jicarilla Culture Heroes. He first attempted to make the sun.

inspiration - the arousal within the mind of some idea, feeling, or impulse; one that leads to creative action.

intricacies - difficult to follow or understand.

kiva - ceremonial dwelling.

Llanero - the Plains People, represented by the red flag during the Go-gíí-ya ceremony. A Spanish word which, when translated, means "Plains People."

long life - a type of blessing with emphasis on living a long and prosperous life.

Ollero - the Sand People, represented by the white flag during the Go-gíí-ya ceremony. A Spanish word which, when translated, means "Sand People."

practitioners - people who practice a certain ceremony or rite.

prominent - well-known.

race track - a race track of three hundred yards, laid out from East to West on which the Go-gíí-ya relay race is performed.

rite - a solemn or religious ceremony performed in an established or prescribed manner.

shamanism - having to do with magic, usually practiced by North American Indian medicine men.

Please answer the following questions after discussing the material :

1. Why was the first ceremonial race held?
2. Who were the participants of that race?
3. What are the names of the two clans and, when translated, what do they mean?
4. Which clan represent the white flag?
   Which clan represent the red flag?
5. What do these things represent in the ceremony?
   a. race track
   b. kiva
   c. lake
   d. Milky Way
6. Why do the Jicarilla people continue to hold the race every year?
7. Name the month and date that the Go-gíiya celebration is held every year.

Study the vocabulary list carefully. Then define the following words according to the context in which they are used in this booklet.

Ancestral Man

culture heroes

Ancestral Woman

Holy Boy

emergence

ceremonialist

deities

Llanero

Ollero

practitioner

rite

door keeper

dressed in the feather

long life

shamanism

kiva

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